

The Sisters of the Heavenly Way Its History, Purpose and Future

“Perfect indeed is the sublimity of the receptive energy. All beings owe their lives to its support. It realizes the will of nature within.”

from *Harmony: The Art of Life* by Hua Ching Ni (OmNi)

The world is in turmoil due to an over exaltation of masculine energy. Pushed by this energy, we over intellectualise and externalise, and we rush after physical expansion and material gain in competitive and aggressive ways. Because of all this rushing about, we fail to receive the subtle life-giving messages that emanate from within and outside ourselves. We fail, as OmNi remarks, “to give Mother Nature a chance to inspire our vision of life. As a result, we make mistakes, some of which are fatal.”

How do we redress this life-threatening imbalance?

In *The Power of the Feminine*, OmNi and Dr Mao reiterate the truth of our natural spiritual heritage that only by allowing receptive feminine energy to balance and guide masculine initiative and impulse, can we restore balance to our lives and fulfil our spiritual potential.

And so it was in that work, published in 2004, that the Sisters Group was organised with the purpose to encourage women to step forward and take more responsibility in guiding the world to peace and balance through the receptive feminine principle with its gentle, quiet, nurturing and humble power.

This role has its roots in the teachings of the Heavenly Way—the normality of Nature—that recognise the superiority of feminine virtue over masculine virtue in handling human affairs, in easing human relationships and in actualising a spiritual life. Without the quiet and receptive virtues of the feminine, there is little or no opening to experience the subtler dimensions of life and realise the Will of Nature.

The teachings of the Heavenly Way are the collective wisdom of developed ancestors that manifested in China during the long prehistoric stage of matriarchal society, when mothers and capable women taught and led their social groups. As women they knew, instinctually, how to give, nourish and love life.

Living in close contact with nature and being naturally quieter and more receptive than the men, the women developed a keen and clear mind (the power of *kuan*) that allowed them to become aware of life's patterns and receive its subtle messages. Through their deep observations and experiences, they realised how the natural ethics of kindness and humility are more life-

giving than social competition, and how self-governance is more intrinsically strengthening and less burdensome than group or social regulation.

These women discovered the Subtle Laws or Will of Nature, and taught their families how to live effectively by harmonising with that Will. This way of life was taught to the Yellow Emperor by, among others, an achieved female, known as the *Lady-in-Blue*, at a time when China was entering the male-centred stage some 4500 years ago. And it was transmitted to Lao Tzu by his mother some 2600 years ago.

Both the *I Ching* and the *Tao Teh Ching* record the valuable discoveries of ancient female leaders. These works uphold the gentle, soft and receptive feminine principle as the guiding way of a moral, balanced life, and for spiritual realisation. True growth and enlightenment occur through cooperation and integration. Scatteredness and decline occur through unhealthy competition, insistence and divisiveness.

Today, the Sisters group encourages women leadership and has a female majority. It upholds the voice of those early women whose core teaching is to respond to evil with virtue, and to respond to destruction with constructive activity. In these groups, women learn how to manage their emotions and balance their energies for effective service, and for true fulfilment personally, socially and spiritually.

Through *chi* movement, meditation and readings from publications of the Integral Way, especially the *Tao Teh Ching*, the Sisters create a context where women can revalue the natural and important role of feminine virtue, and gain confidence in its gentle wisdom and quiet strength. By nurturing the power of *kuan*, women can experience a deep peace and subtle support that comes through resting into Nature's essence. They may be inspired to share these teachings in creative ways with their families, communities and work colleagues. Others can then have an opportunity to appreciate how quiet, inner work is equally important, if not more important, to the outer aspects of life. Individuals can begin to see how balancing and developing their inner energies can light up their internal life, yielding hope for lighting up the world outside.

As more women value and uphold feminine virtue and step into leadership roles, I envisage that life will become less harsh, kinder and more mellow. I envisage that our unique human potential for soul development will become appreciated and supported on a larger cultural scale.

As both men and women balance and fulfil themselves through the natural functioning and integration of masculine and feminine energies, and develop their minds through linking rational intellect with the power

of *kuan*, it will not matter who is in power, and groups such as the Sisters may no longer be necessary.

It is impractical to expect to return to a completely natural life as in the days of old, but I do feel that balanced feminine leadership, as described in this article, will offer people an opportunity for a healthier, happier life. And it will better guide people to care for and work with the natural world, while offering it our deep respect and gratitude.

We ought never doubt the work of spreading the seeds of the Heavenly Way, even though we may not physically see the flowers and fruit in our life times.